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RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 1226
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; September 2, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Three Cities in Gyeonggi Province Seek
to Merge to Gain More Influence

JoongAng Ilbo
ROKG Seeks to Construct "Great Train Express" (GTX) that will Enable
Users to Travel from Dongtan to Gangnam
in 20 Minutes

Dong-a Ilbo
Bill on Public Teacher Evaluation Likely to be Passed during Current
Parliamentary Session

Hankook Ilbo
ROKG Urged to Address Confusion Caused by Delayed Construction of
"Sejong Multifunctional Administrative City"

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Trial over Deaths of Tenants during January Clash with Riot Police
in Yongsan Crippled, with Prosecutors Refusing to Disclose
Investigation Report

Segye Ilbo
ROKG Measures to Protect Temporary Workers Ineffective

Seoul Shinmun
Busan to Host Meeting of World Churches

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to a senior official from the ruling camp, President Lee
Myung-bak told the North Korean delegation that came to pay respects
upon the death of former President Kim Dae-jung that his North Korea
policy differs from that of his predecessors and that he is prepared
to aid North Korea if it gives up its nuclear weapons. (Chosun,
JoongAng, Dong-a)

Gyeonggi Province decided yesterday to provide North Korea with
2,500 tons of corn worth 1 billion won. (Dong-a)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

Citing a senior official from the ruling camp, conservative Chosun Ilbo and Dong-a Ilbo and right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo reported that President Lee Myung-bak told the North Korean delegation that came to pay respects upon the death of former President Kim Dae-jung that his North Korea policy differs from that of his predecessors and that he is prepared to aid North Korea if it gives up its nuclear weapons.

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo ran a front-page report on Gyeonggi Province's decision to provide North Korea with 2,500 tons of corn worth 1 billion won. The report noted that there is speculation that the aid may be related to North Korea's recent release of an ROK worker and four fishermen held in the country, because the aid decision came shortly after their release.

-Japan Elections

Commentary continues to flow about the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)'s election victory. Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized: "The DPJ's emphasis on Asia should be seen as related to China's sudden rise (as a global economic and political power.) ... If China and Japan once again engaged in fighting for hegemony in Asia, it

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would have direct repercussions for the Korean Peninsula. ... Japan's move to end its dependence on the U.S. and to carry out an independent Asia strategy may lead to the country's rearmament and a revival of Japanese militarism."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

NEW JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HERALDS CHANGES FOR KOREA
(Chosun Ilbo, September 2, 2009, Page 35)

"The era of U.S.-led globalism is coming to an end and... we are moving away from a unipolar world towards an era of multipolarity," Japan's next Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama wrote in an article for the New York Times last Thursday. The comments immediately fueled accusations in the United States that Hatoyama was anti-American. He vehemently denies that, but it is unprecedented for a Japanese leader after World War II even to incur the charge.

Hatoyama's Democratic Party of Japan already made it clear in the election campaign that it would speak its mind and say no to the U.S. if necessary. The party is trying to revise a U.S.-Japan agreement to reduce the number of American troops in Okinawa even further. It is also seeking to stop refueling of U.S.-led multinational forces in the Indian Ocean in January of next year. The U.S. State Department said it has "no intention whatsoever" of changing the existing U.S.-Japan agreement. The DPJ will undergo a reality check once it comes to power, but it is undeniable that scenes hitherto unimaginable in U.S.-Japan relations are unfolding before our eyes.

The DPJ is pushing ahead with its "Asia-focused" policy goals instead. The concept of an "East Asian community" sought by Hatoyama is centered on close ties with Japan's regional neighbors including South Korea and China. But the DPJ's emphasis on Asia should be seen as related to China's sudden rise (as a global economic and political power.) In a few years, China will overtake Japan in terms of economic size. It is not difficult to guess the response from the Japanese public and its leadership when the country loses its prized status as the world's second-largest economy. If China and Japan once again engaged in fighting for hegemony in Asia, it would have direct repercussions for the Korean Peninsula.

While opposing a nuclear-armed North Korea, the DPJ has hinted at the possibility of negotiating directly with the North. Depending on circumstances, Japan could offer North Korea massive amounts of money. If changes happen in U.S.-Japan, China-Japan, China-North Korea and Japan-North Korea relations, South Korea too will see fundamental shifts in its national objectives.

After becoming the head of the DPJ in May last year, Hatoyama's first overseas visit was to Korea. He also pledged not to visit the militarist Yasukuni Shrine. Although his position does not differ much from the Liberal Democratic Party when it comes to sovereignty over Korea's Dokdo islets, differences between South Korea and Japan may abate. But the DPJ is full of lawmakers whose views on Japan's wartime history do not differ from the views of LDP members.

Japan may soon be overshadowed by China, but its economy is twice the size of the U.K.'s and France's. It also has 75 percent of the world's cutting-edge core technologies. And now, Japan has embarked on its first-ever transfer of power in more than 50 years. The new leadership is trying to shift its diplomatic focus from the traditional reliance on the U.S. to its Asian neighbors. Japan's move to end its dependence on the U.S. and to carry out an independent Asia strategy may lead to the country's rearmament and a revival of Japanese militarism. Korea is dependent on China for exports and on Japan for technology. The launch of the new Japanese administration is a signal that Korea must waste no time in defining its mid- and long-term national strategies.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is

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identical to the Korean version.)

FEATURES

"NK FIRST OFFERED RELEASE OF FISHING BOAT AND CREW"
(Dong-a Ilbo, September 2, 2009, Front Page)

By Reporter Koh Ki-jung

A North Korean delegation that visited Seoul to honor the late former President Kim Dae-jung late last month first proposed the release of four South Korean crew members aboard a detained fishing boat, a source said yesterday.

A senior official of the ruling camp said the delegation's leader Kim Ki-nam, Secretary of the North's ruling Workers' Party, offered the release of the crew and ship "with a very polite attitude" at a meeting with President Lee Myung-bak.

After the meeting, the South Korean presidential office of Cheong Wa Dae said no discussion took place on specific issues, including the release of the boat.

President Lee reportedly responded by telling the North's delegates that Pyongyang should make a fair decision under international law rather than try to do the South a favor. This comment seems to have prevented the delegation from making demands in return for the release.

The president stressed that the delegates should clearly convey his message to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il that the Lee Administration differs from its predecessors. President Lee said his government will adhere to principles but stay flexible on inter-Korean matters, unlike previous governments, which drew flack for being either too tough or too soft on the North.

President Lee is said to have emphasized several times in a soft tone that Pyongyang must decide whether to abandon its nuclear program to normalize relations with the South. He also reportedly asked Kim Ki-nam through his staff to inform him of Kim Jong-il's response to the meeting's results.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is

identical to the Korean version.)

LEE "TOLD N. KOREANS OF NEW WIND BLOWING IN CHEONG WA DAE"
(Chosun Ilbo, September 2, 2009, Front Page)

By Reporter Hwang Dae-jin

President Lee Myung-bak sent a clear message to North Korea that he is different from previous administrations. Lee reportedly told a North Korean delegation who visited Cheong Wa Dae on August 23 he was different than the governments that led South Korea "in the past 10 years and even the past 20 years before that. Make this point very clear" to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

The delegation, led by Kim Ki-nam, a secretary of the Workers' Party Central Committee, was in Seoul to attend the funeral of former President Kim Dae-jung.

A senior source in the ruling Grand National Party on Tuesday claimed Lee also told the delegation, "Take a look at how fast the world is changing. North Korea must change. If North Korea demonstrates a willingness to change, we will offer support." Lee made those comments after receiving a message from the North Korean leader stressing the need for talks.

He was referring to the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun Administrations, which pursued unconditional engagement with North Korea, while the "past 20 years before that" appears to be a

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The source claimed Lee told the North Koreans that the South was ready to hold talks at any level, including a summit, but stressed the North must understand that denuclearization is a prerequisite to major support from the South and the normalization of ties.

The delegation told Lee that North Korea would free the South Korean fishermen who had been towed to the North at a date the South preferred. But Lee reportedly told them to handle the matter favorably and according to international regulations. A ruling-party source said the government "clearly showed its resolve not to be swayed by North Korea's attempts to use hostages to influence our policies."

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version.)

TOKOLA